

# 1297 Attitudes of Dental Students towards Dentistry as a Career. W.J. BASSON\* AND C.D. LEWIS. Dept. of Psychology, MEDUNSA, South Africa

It is of particular importance to institutions engaged in recruiting, and education and training of dental students to have insight into the personal characteristics and attitudes of their students. The aims of this study was to establish profiles of dental students studying at the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), and also to compare the attitudes of dental students in the various academic years toward dentistry as a career. The study population consisted of 257 students enrolled for dentistry during 1993. A questionnaire was designed to measure career choice and attitudes towards dentistry. A response rate of 58% was obtained, of which 67% were male and 33% female. No career guidance was received by 57% of respondents prior to enrolment. The main reasons for choosing dentistry were: convenient working hours (65%), service to the community (60%) and high income (51%). The attitudes of students towards dentistry as a career were positive for all six groups. The first year group was the most positive and the final year group the least positive about their future career, although this difference was not statistically significant. From this study it can be concluded that the majority of students chose dentistry as a career because of the convenient working hours, and that the attitudes of dental students towards their career remain positive throughout their training.

# 1299 Evaluation of Computerized Learning Packages in a Problem-based Dental Curriculum. T.A. WINNING\* and G.C. TOWNSEND (Dept. of Dentistry, University of Adelaide, South Australia 5005).

Despite increasing use of computer-assisted learning (CAL) in health education, there have been few applications reported in undergraduate dental curricula. Realistic dental situations in the form of paper and CAL Dental Learning Packages (DLPs) are presented throughout the five years of the new problem-based dental course at Adelaide. The DLPs provide context to learning by integrating basic scientific and clinical topics. The aim of this study was to compare students' attitudes to paper and CAL DLPs. First and second year students completed questionnaires seeking feedback on the DLPs, using a scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Mean scores were compared by t-tests. Students considered that the CAL DLPs were a more effective learning technique (paper:  $3.1 \pm 1.1$  ( $\bar{x} \pm sd$ ),  $n = 89$ ; CAL:  $4.1 \pm 0.9$ ,  $n = 43$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), the learning format was more enjoyable (paper:  $3.1 \pm 1.1$ ,  $n = 89$ ; CAL:  $4.2 \pm 1.0$ ,  $n = 44$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and the content was more interesting (paper:  $3.5 \pm 1.0$ ,  $n = 89$ ; CAL:  $4.4 \pm 0.8$ ,  $n = 44$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and more stimulating (paper:  $3.1 \pm 1.1$ ,  $n = 87$ ; CAL:  $4.5 \pm 0.5$ ,  $n = 44$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Students responses to the introduction of CAL modules into the new Adelaide curriculum are encouraging, particularly as over 50% are from non-English speaking backgrounds. It is intended to develop CAL DLPs for use by other student groups and by practising dentists. (Supported by Australian Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching and a University of Adelaide Research Grant)

# 1301 Assessment of a Clinical Training Program of HIV/AIDS Education. T. RAYBOULD\*, J. BECKER, R. CALMES, T. COLLINS, J. STEPHENSON, G. FERRETTI (U of KY, Col of Dent and Med).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a training program in eliminating misconceptions and influencing positive attitudes toward treating HIV+ patients, thereby increasing the number of practice settings available for these patients. A 6 hour clinical HIV/AIDS training program was provided for groups of 4-10 oral health providers one Saturday each month. The course included teaching of oral, medical, universal precautions and epidemiological considerations. A clinical experience with observation of HIV+ patients being treated and time for the participants to interact with the patients was provided. Time was also devoted to group discussion with questions answered by the physician, dentist and scientific experts who provided these services. A follow-up survey of past participants was conducted between 3 and 12 months post training. 31 of 32 (97%) oral health professionals who participated in the training sessions from September 1992-May 1993 completed the survey. 17 (54%) of the participants reported improved infection control procedures, 7 (22%) had improved willingness to treat HIV+, and all 31 (100%) participants rated this course very effective in imparting knowledge and promoting confidence about HIV/AIDS. The results of this assessment support previous studies' findings that health care professionals are more willing to treat and provide care for HIV+ patients if they have been properly educated. This study was supported by the AIDS Education Training Grant #SDPE0015 (DHHS, PHS, HRSA).

# 1303 Patient perceptions of important features in dental practice planning. G BRADNOCK (Dental Public Health, University of Birmingham, UK.)

The climate of change prevalent in dental practice within the U.K. during the 1990s has stimulated a variety of self assessment activity amongst dentists. A self audit group in the West Midlands commissioned an investigation amongst their patients. The aims were to establish which features of practice were most influential in choice of practice, under what circumstances patients might change practice and to what extent patients would be prepared to be referred elsewhere. Questionnaires were distributed to every third patient presenting to six dentists, over an eight week period. The content of the questionnaires was determined by the dentists, following two brainstorming sessions. The format was designed by the researcher, to produce appropriate documentation to be completed by patients from a variety of backgrounds, within five minutes. Patients were also asked, by declaring a contact telephone number, whether they would be prepared to take part in an in-depth interview following analysis of the data. 317 questionnaires were completed. Women constituted 63% of respondents. In determining which features are influential in remaining with their present practice, 93% of respondents felt that friendliness of the dentist was very important, 82% considered that approachability of practice staff was also very important. In contrast parking space was considered to be very important by only 25% of patients, even though 70% had driven to their appointment. Two thirds of patients specified that they would prefer to have general anaesthetic at their own practice, although only 4% declared that they were not prepared to be referred. In conclusion, access is considered to be of less importance than staff approachability in choice of practice and that once a practice is decided upon patients are unwilling to move.

# 1298 Freshman Dental Students' Motives for Choosing Dentistry in Hong Kong and Denmark. E. SCHWARZ\* (The University of Hong Kong) & M. VIGILD (The University of Copenhagen).

Concern about the future of dentistry and dentists' job opportunities are expressed worldwide. How this affects students choosing dentistry in contrasting cultures is little known. The purpose of this study was to elucidate selected background characteristics of 1994 freshman dental students and to analyse the students' reported priorities and motives for choosing dentistry in two different societies, Hong Kong and Denmark. All 1994 freshmen students in the two dental schools in Denmark and the one in HK responded to identically worded questionnaires distributed during their first days in school. HK: Fifty students (90%) responded, 56% were women, 44% were men, most were 19-20 years old. The high proportion of women is new to dentistry in Hong Kong and may be a factor to count into future manpower analysis. DK: One hundred and nine students responded (87%), 66% were women, 34% were men. Dentistry was the 1st priority of 62% of the HK students, 75% of the DK students. The priority was not related to when they had decided to study dentistry or whether there were health workers in the family. Through factor analysis a 23 item battery of identically worded possible motives to study dentistry was reduced to 7 factors (HK) and 8 factors (DK). These factors accounted for 65% and 71% of the variation in motivation respectively. In conclusion, most dental freshmen had dentistry as their top priority and irrespective of cultural background, their motives for choosing dentistry were mainly based on the medical/altruistic nature of dentistry, the potential economic benefits and positive expectations to the work of a dentist or the dental course. Differences in societal attitudes toward dentistry in HK and DK might be reflected in the much lower weighting of the esteem factor by the HK students than by the DK students.

# 1300 The value of on-site CPR training in general dental practice. JM FLETCHER\* (Department of Clinical Dental Sciences, The University of Liverpool, United Kingdom)

The need to train general dental practitioners in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is well recognised. This study was set up to examine the value of on-site training and re-training in CPR in general dental practice. Starting in 1990, 436 general dental practices in the Mersey Region (UK) were offered on-site training with scheduled annual re-training (The Mersey CPR Scheme). Training involved a visit to the practice by a resuscitation officer who spent 2.5 hours training the staff in theoretical and practical aspects of emergency management. Training included the management of medical emergencies/collapse, risk reduction, team management and provision of emergency equipment. Practical training took place on simulator manikins. During the next two years, 288 (66%) practices were visited for basic training purposes and 1798 personnel were trained (849 dentists, 869 dental assistants and 386 clerical staff). A random sample of 74 dentists who were offered training was audited under a system of peer review. 71 dentists had had CPR training, 54 of these were trained under the Mersey scheme. 23 dentists reported having had to manage an emergency in the practice. 72 dentists considered that CPR training is best carried out on-site in the practice.

On-site instruction is an effective method of postgraduate training in CPR.

# 1302 Attitudes of dental personnel towards people with learning disabilities. R. BEDI\*, D. POLLARD and R. HORN (The School of Dentistry, University of Birmingham, UK).

The aims of the study were to develop a scale to assess attitudes of dental personnel towards people with learning disabilities and to pilot the scale on a sample of dental personnel. A series of anonymous questionnaires designed to explore attitudes towards this group were tested on clinical dental students and dental nurses. Factor analysis showed five factors underlying the expressed attitudes: perceived problems in the dental environment, additional resources, normalisation, specialist care and equity in health care. A new scale of 20 items was developed using these domains, based on a Likert scale, and tested on 92 dental personnel. A score of 20 to 100 was possible, with positive attitudes obtaining higher scores. The scale gave high levels of internal reliability ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) and a scale mean of 71 ( $sd$  9.9). The scale was piloted on 74 general dental practitioners (GDPs) and 89 dental nurses who work in the Birmingham region. Internal reliability scores of 0.77 and 0.78 were achieved using the scale for GDPs and nurses respectively. No significant differences for either group ( $t$ -test,  $p < 0.05$ ) were found with gender, age and personal contact with people with learning disabilities. The total mean score for the 50th percentile was 67.5 (5th percentile = 52.9, 95th percentile = 81.1) and 77 (61.1 and 86.9) respectively for GDPs and nurses ( $p < 0.001$ , ANOVA). In conclusion, the study showed that this scale, developed to measure attitudes of dental personnel towards people with learning disabilities, gave high levels of internal reliability. Pilot testing showed that dental nurses score more positive attitudes than general dental practitioners.

# 1304 Women Dentists: Exploring Role Complexities Using Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Z.J. COMINO CERNY\* (Public Health Dentistry, University of Sydney, Australia).

Quantitative methodology is central to dental research. Studies utilising qualitative methods of dental research are limited. This paper explores the differences between qualitative and quantitative information in a case study of one woman dentist (Sydney University graduate). A questionnaire was the form employed for the quantitative method and a taped oral interview for the qualitative method. Career choice was the focus for the study. In empowering the subject, the taped interview allows expression for the importance of roles and relationships in women's lives. By incorporating elements of communication, psychology and history, the oral history method embodies a multidisciplinary perspective. Resultant interpretation of both methods suggest that qualitative methodology information is richer and more complex in description. Taped interviews offer an exciting source for new dimensions in the understanding of women dentists and their lives.